

With the
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Sarah Bradlee Fulton-Patriot

A Colonial Drama in Three Acts

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By Grace Jewett Austin

Bloomington, Illinois

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Sarah Bradlee Fulton—Patriot

A COLONIAL DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

By GRACE JEWETT AUSTIN

Bloomington, Illinois

1919

CHARACTERS

SARAH BRADLEE FULTON, a patriotic woman of Medford, Mass.

BETSY BRADLEE, sister-in-law of Sarah.

JOHN FULTON, husband of Sarah.

NAT BRADLEE, husband of Betsy.

PAUL REVERE, well-known Patriot.

MISTRESS FLUCKER, Tory woman.

LUCY FLUCKER, (later Knox), daughter of Mistress Flucker.

PARSON EMERSON, grandfather of the Poet.

MAJOR BROOKS, officer of the Colonial Army.

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Many Patriots, Villagers and Red-coats.

Time: During American Revolution.

Place: Boston and Environs.

ACT I

SCENE I.

Place: Colonial kitchen of the Bradlees, in Boston.

Time: December 15, 1773.

(*Fireplace at left, window at rear, entrance at right. Prominent among the furniture are a long table and a spinning wheel.*)

Enter Betsy Bradlee carrying a large iron pot, followed by Sarah Fulton with a basket on her arm.

SARAH. Well a day, Betsy; are the coals low? We must heap on fuel, for the night is cold and the chowder must be hot.

BETSY. (*Bustling about.*) How quick the night comes on! It's candles and more candles, almost before the noontide chores are done. I wonder if Nat hath plenty out in the shop.

SARAH. Never fear; he'll pile his hearth with knots and shavings—and men in these days fret not for too much light upon their meetings.

BETSY. (*Eagerly.*) What, sister! Brought you and John aught of news from Medford?

SARAH. Naught save of the temper of the men there. The British rule and taxes gall them more each day. But we must bestir ourselves, sister, and quit gossiping. Chowder by my rule is not the work of a minute. Here, sit ye, sister, and peel potatoes and onions—till ye weep for Liberty, ha! ha!—Ah, the night is cold, the water-bucket in the corner skims over with ice, and the kettle will be slow in boiling. I'll use a double pot-hook, Betsy, that the kettle may be nearer the fire.

BETSY. Plague on these onions, Sally! 'Tis a pity the Lord Governor doth not tax these in place of tea. I have a bitter dislike of old sage-steepings, and the men will not taste the stuff. Nat put a jug of cider on the hearth to mull, at noon hour. 'Tis the nighest to hot drink that they'll get.

SARAH. (*Runs to reticule and holds up parcel.*) Say not so, Betsy. Here's a packet of Liberty Tea,—very much the fashion in Medford. 'Tis an herb, belike you know, but 'tis strong and comforting. Now where's the trivet and the spider? You shall smell the good hot bacon frizzling. 'Twill relieve the onion tears.—Ah, Betsy, you have peeled a goodly bowlful, and the water boils. In they go, with salt and pepper, proper portions.—Now the hiss of bacon and fat.

BETSY. 'Tis a queer mixture. Think you the men will like it?



COLONIAL DRAMA
SARAH BRADLEE FULTON: PATRIOT

BY
GRACE JEWETT AUSTIN

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE LETITIA GREEN STEVENSON
CHAPTER OF THE
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

BENEFIT OF WOUNDED
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
OF McLEAN COUNTY

STAGED BY MRS. H. C. RODENHAUSER

CHATTERTON OPERA HOUSE

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIRST
NINETEEN HUNDRED NINETEEN
AT EIGHT FIFTEEN O'CLOCK.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

The Boston Tea Party struck one of the earliest blows to make the world safe for Democracy. When the little band of Patriots, disguised as "Mohawks" ran to the harbor boarded the "Dartmouth" and other tea-ships, and threw the unjustly taxed tea overboard, it was the first formal protest against monarchy.

*"No, ne'er was mingled such a draught
In palace, hall or arbor,
As freemen brewed, and tyrants quaffed,
That night in Boston Harbor!"*
Holmes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

in order of entrance

Betsy Bradlee- Sister-in-law of Sarah . Miss Winifred Kates
Sarah Bradlee Fulton- Colonial matron

Mrs. H. C. Rodenhauser

Paul Revere - Well known Patriot Paul Rogers

Nat Bradlee - Husband of Betsy Harold Brazelton

John Fulton - Husband of Sarah Arthur Graves

Patriots Warren Brown, George Monroe, Roy

Costigan, Richard Calhoun, William Galford, George

Marton, Emmett Gunn.

Mistress Flucker - Tory neighbor in Boston

Miss Lottie Nelson

Lucy Flucker, later Mistress Knox, daughter of above -

Miss Ethel Gunn

Parson Emerson - Grandfather of the poet Earl Bach

Colonial women and neighbors, also Nurses

Mrs. Frank Eberlein, Ruth Shepard, Ellen Margaret Holton
Gladys Rogers, Katherine Lahey, Lottie Nelson, Alma
Otto.

Major Brooks of Washington's Staff . . . Harry Admire

General George Washington . . . Dr. George B. Kelso

Washington's Staff . . . Henry Stanberry, Harry Admire

Britishers . . . Members of Company M.

Frank Eberlein, Roland Gee, Harold Livingston, Charles

Hastings, Robert Herr, William Galford

Colonial Lad . . . Hobart Lash

Minuet danced by . . .

Mrs. Frank Eberlein, Misses Winifred Kates, Ethel

Gunn, Grace Craig, Katherine Lahey, Ruth Shepard,

Ellen Margaret Holton, Alma Otto.

Messrs. Frank Eberlein, Emmett Gunn, Harold Brazel-

ton, Paul Rogers, George Marton, William Galford,

Roy Costigan, Richard Calhoun.

Under the direction of Madeline Mayes

Indian costumes furnished by the Red Men Lodge

Music by Dornaus Orchestra and McLean County Drum Corps

Miss Gladys Sims, Soloist

Mrs. Frank Eberlein . . . Prompter

SYNOPSIS

Act I. Scene I. Colonial Kitchen of the Bradlees in Boston.

Time: Night before the Boston Tea Party, Dec. 15, 1773

Scene II. Same setting. Night of the Tea Party

Act II. Scene I. Open field and road with stone wall

Time: Lexington Day April 19, 1775

Scene II. Same setting

Time: Bunker Hill Day, June 17, 1775

Note In this scene curtain falls for a moment and rises on same scene ten hours later, by moonlight.

Act III. Scene I. Keeping room or parlor of the Fultons in Melford.

Time: Evening in the fall of 1775

Scene II. Same setting

Time: A few weeks later

SARAH. Trust to me, my Betsy. John was stall-fed by his mother, and bethought no such cook as Madam Fulton ever stepped, but even he doth praise my chowder with extravagance. 'Tis an Indian dish, but since they took my grandsire's scalp, it is befitting I should get some blessing from them. Now the goodly cod, straight from Martin's wharf,—see me whack it! I would it were an enemy, for I'll slash and slash and slash!

BETSY. (*Shocked.*) Hush, sister,—you make cold chills creep o'er me. I fear you have a war-like spirit. One trickle of blood makes me faint and like to die.

SARAH. (*Slowly.*) I like not blood,—but bitter do I hate our enemies.

BETSY. (*Reprovingly.*) But Parson Emerson hath said—

—*Sounds of cheers from Bradlee's shop nearby, with shouting, "Down, down with tyranny!"*

BETSY. (*With a terrified finger at her lip.*) Oh, hasten the chowder to a finish, Sally! The men are forgetting all prudence. Mistress Matilda Flucker next door hath a hungry ear for what she calls "treason."

SARAH. (*Tasting with a long spoon.*) 'Tis ready for milk now, Betsy dear, and where is the bag of pilot bread I brought from Medford? My father hath eaten many a bite of such in the far Indies.—Just a mite more salt and pepper,—'tis a wonder how milk eats up the salt.—Now,—now, Betsy, tasted ye ever the like?

BETSY. (*With a faraway look.*) 'Tis toothsome, indeed,—but somehow my heart is heavy. I like not these quarrels with the mother-country.

SARAH. (*Blows her a kiss.*) I know thee—a-worrying over Nat. But bethink thee how quickly Nat and all his crew will be here, hungry. Put on the plates and trenchers while I brew my famous "Liberty Tea." Put on plenty of apples and a heaping dish of symbolbs—"doughnuts," my mother-in-law doth call them.

(*A resounding rap and a jovial man's head appears at the door.*)

PAUL REVERE. Greetings to ye, Mistresses! The smell of ye good supper penetrates even to the shop, and Master Nat bade me inquire if all be ready.

BETSY. (*Curtseys, speaks brightly.*) Ready enough, Neighbor Revere,—bid them come at once and seek their places. (*Exit Revere.*)

BETSY. Oh, the trampling! Have ye enough to feed 'em, Sarah?

SARAH. Enough for a regiment of valiant "Sons of Liberty."

BETSY. Oh, sh—sh, don't speak it!

(*Door opens, men in colonial dress enter,—not court dress, but dress of men from serious work.*)

GENERAL CHORUS. Greetings, Mistress Bradlee!

NAT BRADLEE. And I think ye all know my sister Sarah, Mistress Fulton from Medford. She's good enough for John Fulton here, and that's a mighty worthy recommendation.

SARAH. Be still with ye, Nat, and get these cold hungry folk down to business. 'Tis a raw December night, forsooth.—Now, good sirs, ye're to try an Indian dish,—fish chowder—maybe you've oft eaten it elsewhere, but they say there's a special kink in mine.

SEVERAL MEN. (*Heartily.*) Good stuff!—Our praise to ye, Mistress!

NAT. I'll kiss ye for this, sister, when my bowl is done.

REVERE. Methinks that's a sauce we'd all like to share, if 'twere not robbing Squire Fulton.

SARAH. Crack all the jokes ye wish, men, if later ye'll drink a toast with me in Liberty Tea, that I brought from Medford.

NAT, (*Starting up.*) Not Bohea, gal? None of that in my house.

BETSY. Soft, Nat. 'Tis herb of loose-strife, all the rage in Medford.

NAT. Well, serve it up—and tell your toast. I reckon well it won't be to the King.

SARAH. Nay, brother, that it will not be. And yet, bethink thee well before ye drink:—*To the King's Tea—May it steep in Boston Harbor!*

JOHN FULTON. (*Starts up.*) Wife,—wife.—what is this?

SARAH. Ay, "Sons of Liberty" you are, and sit by the fire like tame tabbies! Up, I say, when there's a deed at your door right ach-

ing to be done. I do not call to bloodshed—go as red savages, if ye will, but *go*, I say, and drown the cursed tea ten fathoms deep!

(*The men start to their feet, with cups of steaming herb stuff in their hands.*)

REVERE. (*Leaps lightly on the table.*) Well said, Mistress Fulton. Ye've invited us to a tea-party, the like of which was never seen before,—but by my faith, I will accept—with pleasure!

OTHERS. (*Shouting.*) And I! And I! And I!

REVERE. (*Jumps from table, bows low to ladies, who curtsey.*) Thanks for that doughty chowder, fair ladies, which has filled us ready for great deeds. We'll to the shop and plot and plan details of next night's party. (*Exit men.*)

BETSY. (*Sinks in a chair and covers eyes.*) They'll all be killed,—O Sarah, what will become of us?

SARAH. (*Erect, with iron spoon in hand.*) Betsy Bradlee, behave thyself! There's good chowder left for thee and me, and when we've eaten, we'll be brave and worthy "Daughters of Liberty."

CURTAIN.

ACT I

SCENE II.

Place: Same setting, the Bradlee's kitchen, in Boston.

Time: One night later, December 16, 1773.

Curtain rises on Nat and Betsy Bradlee.

NAT. (*Standing before the fire.*) Well, little woman, it grows late,—and soon the "Mohawks" will be gathering. John and Sarah are coming, with Sarah on the pillion behind, and then we two will get on the war-paint and feathers.

BETSY. (*Leaves spinning wheel whirring, runs to him.*) Nat, you will be careful, careful? There is great uneasiness in me about this night's work;—is it stealing from the King?

NAT. (*Stoutly.*) Not so, in faith! 'Tis but a gentle blow, to let him know this sleepy colony is waking. Have no fears, little wife, but keep up the fire, and heat water, so we may get again a Christian skin.

(*Sounds of horse and rider.*) "Whoa, whoa, there!" (*Sarah, rushes in, much bundled with wraps.*)

SARAH. Oh, the cold riding! Were I not wrapped so deep, you would have to seat me in the snow-bank, to thaw. (*More seriously.*) Be careful of your windows, before you and John put on the disguise. In yonder there is a wide chink between the shutters. I saw you and Betsy plainly, from without.

NAT. The shutters are old and shrunken. Each year I plan to make others, but the shoemaker's family always goeth unshod. Betsy, bring a quilt and I'll tack it over the window.

(*John Fulton enters stamping, throws down bundle which clanks.*)

JOHN. Hatchets, blankets, feathers and red and yellow ochre,—was that all Revere told us to bring? My faith, we may all go to scalping before the morn.

BETSY. (*With quilt, shrieks.*) Scalping!!!

SARAH. Sh—sh, sister; know you not how John loveth a jest in all times unseasonable? At old Madam Pierce's funeral he did whisper 'twas a wonder if the good dinner they served would not make her rise,—she was that pinching of a penny.

NAT. (*Climbing down from window.*) Now let's to our disguising, that when the Mohawks give the owl-hoot, we may straightway be gone.

BETSY. 'Tis a bitter night to go without mufflers.

NAT. Aye, but wife, red and yellow are warm colors,—know ye not that? And within we each carry a fire—'tis indignation—that will warm us well. (*Has slipped on disguise, begins to dance and wave hatchet.*) Hi-yi! Hi-yi!—the murdering band!

SARAH. (*Severely.*) Have ye no sense, Nat? This is a job for stillness like the grave, unless ye wish your bones to clank on Gallows Hill.

BETSY. (*Wails.*) O Nathaniel,—gallows!

NAT. (*Bends to kiss her, leaves smudges of paint on her cheeks.*) Cheer up, my girl, now ye're branded as the Mohawk's bride. (*Sound of hooting, thrice,—silence,—then thrice again. All stand hushed.*)

SARAH. (*Goes to door and opens cautiously.*) Enter, Friends.

(Voice outside.) "Darken the lights."

SARAH. Forsooth what a fool I am! (*Puts out candles,—only fire-light left; opens door slowly.*)

REVERE. (*Stalking in with seven other "Mohawks," low tone.*) All here?—Now, out the back way in the greatest stillness;—not in company, but one, then one, then one, and so on, at a sufficient distance from one another. Meet first at Old South Church, bide in the shadow, and when the gathering of patriots is at fever heat,—dash inside. We'll shout, "Boston Harbor a teapot tonight!"—then make a rush for Griffin's wharf and the old ship Dartmouth. It will be ill luck if nigh 400 tea-chests be not soon well smashed and floating overboard. Is all understood? In trouble, give the owl-hoot signal. Gather not after the deed, but each at home be soon abed, lest there be searching. Wash away paint and burn the feathers. Is all ready? Mistresses, farewell!

(*John and Nat go last, each with a silent farewell in the dim room to his wife. Sarah lights candles, gets out a great kettle and fills it with water.*)

BETSY. (*Runs to window, pulls aside quilt and tries to see out, moans.*) Oh, the bitter frost! And belike the soldiers are guarding the tea with flintlocks and bayonets. (*She turns and sinks into a chair, her head on her lap, weeping. Quilt drops to floor unnoticed.*)

SARAH. (*Begins to sing a verse of a Psalm (81st. Common Metre):*

"Sing loud to God our strength; with joy
To God of Jacob sing,
Take up a psalm, the pleasant harp,
Timbrel and psaltery bring."

Sing with me, Betsy; 'twill lift up your heart. My good mother always counseled that, in times of low spirit, and my grandam hath told me how once in the block house, besieged by savages, they did sing until succor came from Plymouth.

BETSY. My throat is all choked. I could not sing if I died for not singing.

SARAH. Well, at least help me fill the big pot to wash our Indians into white Christians again. Here, there are good coals,—why not fill the warming pans? The sea-wind blows chill tonight. I'll brew some of that drink we're all learning to like,—the Indie Coffee,—'twill be so before long we would not take tea if they begged us to have it.

(*Rap at the door. Betsy runs and clutches Sarah, who shakes her off sternly and points to the spinning wheel. Betsy runs to it and sets it whirring. Sarah opens door cautiously.*)

SARAH. Oh, 'tis you, Mistress Flucker! Come in by the fire.

MISTRESS FLUCKER,—*bent, wrinkled old woman, shawl-wrapped, with peering eyes.* Good evening to you, mistresses. I see ye've got the big pot out,—no pig-sticking on hand likely at this time o' year?

SARAH. (*Calmly.*) 'Twould be no bad time, for 'tis good keeping weather, and the chine and spare-ribs taste well in winter cold.

MISTRESS FLUCKER. Did ye say ye *were* pig killin'?

SARAH. No, Mistress Flucker, I did not. I'm thinking of hulling corn. My mother-in-law doth thribble it, and 'tis a mighty fine flavor, though it takes long doing.

MISTRESS FLUCKER. I have not the stomach for hulled corn. In old England—where, praise God, I am about to go,—we never eat those savage dishes.

SARAH. No, nor roast turkey, oysters, cranberry sauce, and other bounteous dishes of the colonies. 'Tis a pity ye must leave them.

MISTRESS FLUCKER. (*Huffed.*) Ye need waste no pity. 'Tis not next door I'll be then to a common carpenter, with all the riff-raff of Boston shouting and tramping about. I'll leave ye, mistresses, to your *hulled corn*, but I must say 'tis strange the making of it should make yon spinner sit all doubled up, a weeping. That's all I have to say, though there are mighty strange works around this house. (*Exit Mrs. Flucker.*)

SARAH. Oh, the quilt! Careless Betsy and careless me for not noting its fall. I'll warrant her eyes were glued to the crack for a half-hour. I'll go to the shop for nails and make it fast.

(*Quick knock and entrance of lovely girl.*)

LUCY FLUCKER. O Mistress Bradlee,—what is on foot tonight? Was—was Henry Knox with you, but a half hour since?

BETSY. (*Stammers.*) Why,—why—Lucy—

SARAH. (*Comes and puts arm around Betsy.*) Is this Miss Lucy Flucker from next door? Thy mother was with us, within the last half hour.

LUCY. (*Breathlessly.*) Oh,—not with mother,—I mean before that. Oh, I am so affrighted! I—I watched for Henry, by the lilac bush in the back yard, where oft he gives me but an evening word. You will not think it wrong, dear mistresses,—for oh, he is so noble, though my father and mother do hate him sore. And I saw,—Oh, was it *Indians* come out this door? And one—with Henry's voice and carriage—stopped and whispered a sweet word and then was gone! O pity me, and tell me lest I die of fear!

SARAH. And thou'll say naught, if on thy silence hangs brave lives?

LUCY. (*Clasps her hands.*) I'll do naught but pray.

SARAH. Thou knowest of the "Dartmouth" and the other tea-ships, loaded down with taxes we must pay? But, Lucy, we shall never pay them, for that brave band you saw will make a tea-pot of all Boston Harbor.

LUCY. (*Curtseys and dances.*) Oh, the splendid deed! Would we were along to see! But is there no danger?

SARAH. (*Calmly.*) Danger? Yes; but every patriot must meet it, and we women must stand firmly by their side. Go homeward, Lucy dear, that your mother may not seek you. Look as calm as if you had been berry-picking,—but O Lucy, do pray for them all!

(*They embrace, Lucy bends to kiss weeping Betsy, and exit.*)

BETSY. (*Fearfully.*) How loud the clock doth tick, Sally! Is it an omen? Oh, how I wish they all were safely back!

SARAH. 'Twill not be long now. Hush, Betsy, did you hear a step outside?—Oh, there is John's double rap! I will be cautious. O Betsy, put out the candle.

(*She opens door carefully and two "Indians" slip in. Nat takes Betsy in his arms and John bestows a kiss on Sarah.*)

JOHN FULTON. (*Speaks low.*) 'Tis done, girls, and well done. Not an ounce o' the wretched stuff is left for Mistress Flucker's tea-pot next door. Were ye anxious?

BETSY. (*Sobs.*) I've been nigh to death with worry.

SARAH. (*Stoutly.*) Not I. I trust our men and our cause too much. They simply cannot fail. But John and Nat, I distrust Mistress Flucker next door, and I would you looked like Christian men as swift-

ly as possible. Betsy and I will go to bed, and leave you boys the warm kitchen. There's chowder hot in yon little pot, and yonder's the doughnut jar.

NAT. (*Waving hatchet.*) Come on, girls,—a kiss first, or we'll scalp ye! (*Betsy rushes to Nat, Sarah runs away, laughing.*)

SARAH. Tend to your washing, boys. You'll have to hang on to your own scalps if I get hold of you.

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE I

Place: Open road and fields, with stone wall.

Time: Lexington Day, April 19, 1775.

(Enter from different directions, walking hurriedly, Sarah Fulton and Betsy Bradlee, the latter carrying a sleeping infant.)

SARAH. O Betsy, I saw you coming. You must be dead tired! Didn't you know Nat sent me word to come to you?

BETSY. *(Half sobbing.)* I know he did. William Dawes said he was going to ride after Paul Revere and see that no harm came to him. So Nat told him the message. Then Nat went himself to Lexington, to help guard Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams. But, O Sally,—they say Boston is going to be shut up, and I was so afraid Nat would be shut out, and I wouldn't know if he were alive or dead. I thought I'd get a ride with a farmer, but I've walked and walked till I'm nearly dead. Oh, this heavy baby!

(Sarah takes the baby, Betsy staggers over by a bush, sinks down.)

SARAH. Now what's to be done, I wonder? We're nearer Boston than Medford. She never could walk there in all the world. And yet she mustn't lie here. The ground is damp in April, and the Britishers may come back this very road. Sh-sh, little Nat, don't you go to adding a stew to the trouble. I wonder if Betsy got that right about shutting up Boston? Oh, if there isn't Parson Emerson a coming! He's a good helper in time of need.

(She curtseys as best she can, with the baby.)

Sir, you perchance do not remember Mistress Fulton of Medford, but she remembers thy goodly discourses. I am in sore anxiety, for this, my sister-in-law, of thy parish, Mistress Bradlee, lies here exhausted by a walk from town, and can go no farther till she rests. But it seems to me the roadway is not safe for her.

PARSON EMERSON. Good Day, Mistress Fulton. I remember your countenance well, and your sister. Suppose we go behind yon stone wall, spread down my camlet cloak upon a sun-dried spot, and you and I will bear the poor lady thither. Providence has granted us bars to let down, else we might have had hard task to climb the wall.

SARAH. Kind Sir, you are most thoughtful. I will steam and press the garment if it gains aught of wrinkles. O poor Betsy! It seems to me almost more like a faint than sleep.

PARSON. (*Hastily.*) But rouse her not, and let us also kneel behind the wall. I thought the distant sound of shots did reach my ear.

SARAH. Oh, the panic of the night! We were in the sound sleep of midnight when the great galloping came, and Paul Revere's voice shouting so loud it seemed in my very ears, "Get up, and arm—the regulars are coming! Arm! Arm!" He smashed his whip end against our door,—I can think just how his horse was rearing at the step—and shouted, "Up, Mohawk! 'Tis a greater sport than tea!"—for, Sir, I think 'tis known who made the great tea-party in Boston, and the Mohawks are mighty proud of themselves.

PARSON EMERSON. And went your husband? Where, then?

SARAH. He started for Concord, to protect the military stores. God grant our men success,—those rascally Britishers!

PARSON EMERSON. Amen. But, Mistress, there are shots and sound of running feet!

SARAH. Oh, I see red,—'tis red coats coming! O Parson,—had I but my father's gun!

PARSON EMERSON. Nay, sister,—'tis no main line coming,—only a few scattering remnants. We have no arms and we must let them pass. Bethink of the mother and child in our charge.

SARAH. Oh, see 'em run,—the cowards! I must just yell, Parson, if I cannot shoot.

(*Leans over wall, unheeded by running men and shouts*): Down with King George!

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE II

Place: Same as in preceding scene.

Time: Bunker Hill Day, June 17, 1775.

(*Drifting smoke and sounds of guns. Sarah, hatless, sleeves rolled up, stands planted in the road, talking to Revere, Nat Bradlee and John Fulton.*)

SARAH. And why not bring them hither, sirs,—poor wounded fellows? 'Twas here in April I succored my fainting sister and learned the resources of this place. The clear cold water is abundant and the shade is good. The wounded must not be left on the field and they

cannot be taken into Boston. They come from many towns. Perchance here we can refresh many so that with aid they can return homeward.

REVERE. A good idea, Mistress Fulton, and I for one will help it on. I bring you word from General Prescott that you and your neighbor women are to be in charge till the battle be over. Not a surgeon can be spared from the fight.

SARAH. Well, Mr. Revere, here I'll stand till the duty's done. I've a bushel of lint and bandages here, and the women of Medford have met in the meeting house to make more.

REVERE. Who is that coming yonder?

SARAH. Good; 'tis Parson Emerson. I know he wished to fight, but he is far too feeble. He will help us women greatly, in comforting the wounded. Ah, here come my neighbors?

(Women bustle in, followed by Betsy, wiping her eyes.)

SARAH. O Betsy, Betsy,—cork your tear-bottle. Instead of weeping, fill that water-pail at the brook, and lay those bandages by sizes. Jane and Mary, did ye bring the basins that I told ye? Yes, yes, nien,—go, of course, where Prescott waits, and glory. I would I could take a gun and go along.

REVERE. Do come along, Mistress Fulton. Heard ye never of Joan of Arc, in my father's country,—how she led the hosts to victory?

SARAH. Never fear, I'll lead my host—o' petticoats! Ah, Parson Emerson, we welcome you indeed. It puts us in mind of Lexington Day,—and here is our Betsy, Mistress Bradlee, stronger now than then.

BETSY. *(Drops pail and rushes.)* O Nat, Nat, Nat,—are you going? Just hear the guns! I thought you were to stay and help with wounded men.

NAT. Good bye, girl. Keep up a brave heart. I must see a bit how things are going at the front. We left the hill as Prescott's messengers, and to make arrangements with Sarah. Sweetheart, don't make me cross,—I *must* go,—Sarah!

SARAH. Busy, Nat. O Betsy, come and help; I cannot lift this.

PARSON EMERSON. *(Goes and takes Betsy's hand.)* Good morning, Mistress Bradlee,—see, we must help Mistress Fulton. Success to our cause, Bradlee. My prayers go with you.

(Nat plants a quick kiss on his wife's cheek and runs after the other two men. Sounds of attack renewed. Betsy stands despairingly and holds her ears. Parson Emerson looks up, as in prayer.)

SARAH. *(Hurries over, gives Betsy a little shake.)* Betsy, Betsy, —let our parson pray, but we must be at work. The men will fight and we must mend the fighters. Courage, Betsy! God will care for Nat, and God will surely help our country.

(Curtain falls, to rise almost immediately.)

L'ENVOI

(Same scene, ten hours later, by moonlight. Rows of forms on stretchers lie across the field. Women are moving about and bending over them. At the front, clasping hands, stand John and Sarah Fulton, at the side, Nat holds in his arms the weeping Betsy.)

SARAH. *(In a hushed voice.)* Thank God, you could again bring Prescott's word! Tell him three hundred have been cared for; many have gone to their homes,—and some, O John,—some are gone on the long journey.

JOHN. Brave girl, brave Sarah! We've surely fought this long day out together.

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE I

Place: Handsome colonial "keeping room" of the Fulton home in Medford.

Time: An evening in the fall of 1775.

(John Fulton, disabled with rheumatism, sits with bandaged foot propped upon a chair, Betsy sits near, Sarah moves about.)

SARAH. *(Pokes the fire.)* 'Tis good indeed, to see ye, Betsy. I had thought that when 'twas known John was laid by with rheumatism, you might make it in your way to come. Now if Nat were here, and there was fresh fish in the house for chowder, we might have an evening as fine as the Boston Tea Party.

BETSY. Oh, speak not of that, sister! I shudder yet to think of the Mohawks and the risks they ran. Tell me,—can you still relish the chowder as of old?

SARAH. To be sure, I do. I'm hungry for it now. Why, Betsy—girl,—our men are *heroes*,—John and Nat and Mr. Revere and the others. Would you have them sit by the fire and *spin*?

JOHN. *(Grumpily.)* A big hero I look like now.

SARAH. Never fear, John. Betsy has brought the marigold blossoms that I sent for, and I have great faith that well steeped, they will do you much good. A warm drink is steeping by the fire now,—and speaking of fires reminds me the fire burns low. We have much to talk of tonight, and we must keep warm and cheery. Betsy, help me roll on a log. We miss our good fireman yonder.

JOHN. *(Growls.)* Always can tell a woman's fire,—doesn't lie right. Seems to me I might put that on—*ouch!!*

SARAH. Now, John,—you see what a fix you get into. Sit still and be thankful for a "woman's fire." Come, Betsy, this is a woman's log, anyway,—as John will have to admit,—and a big one.

(They roll it on together, with difficulty.)

BETSY. Now what do you mean by that, Sarah?

SARAH. La, haven't you heard the tale of the wood I bought? Maybe John had better tell it.

JOHN. Tell ahead, and I'll add trimmings, if necessary. I thought surely Nat would have gotten hold of that yarn.

SARAH. Sh-sh-sh-, John!

BETSY. (*Grabs her handkerchief and sobs.*) But I haven't seen Nat for eight long weeks. He's with General Washington.

JOHN. And so would I be, but for this plaguey leg.

SARAH. Now, John,—nothing but honor for that leg, since you caught rheumatism in the trenches. Well, let's amuse Betsy with the tale, and—*Elizabeth-Shaw-Bradlee* (shakes her finger at her), if you don't put away that 'kerchief and laugh, I'll never tell you another one. It was but a fortnight ago, one bright morning. I was giving this room a great going over, with my head tied up in an apron. I'd just dusted the spinet, and leaned out the window—so—to shake my duster, when I saw John coming hobbling along as fast as he could go. Now, John, you tell too. We can tell it better together.

JOHN. (*Leans forward and speaks with energy.*) Why, I said, "Sarah, Sarah,—there's an ox load o' wood coming past pretty soon that ye want to watch out for. It's a sham load, and the middle of it is full of food and ammunition for the Yankee boys at Cambridge.

SARAH. Then I nigh had a spasm. I knew there was a batch o' Britishers down the road apiece, getting cider and whatnot at old Madam Page's. I wish her stuff would choke her! I was so excited that I just shouted out of the window,—“John Fulton, get right up on your horse! I'll boost you if ye can't make it,—and go out along the road till you meet that wood and buy it. If it's private property the King's men won't be so ready to take it, and later we'll find a way to send the inside stuff on to our boys. Now, John, tell.

JOHN. Well, I did as Sally told me to, as any good husband should. I tell ye this old leg put up some twinges. The young fellow who was driving the oxen—Deacon Flagg's son Josiah—was only too glad to get a sort o' reinforcement, and we started towards home at a pretty fair gait, Josiah prodding the oxen with the goad, and I a-holding back the mare, that always did hate to go slow when she was headed towards home.

SARAH. Yes,—and there was I, with my apron over my head, out in the front yard watching, with my heart way up here in my throat.

BETSY. They might have shot John,—those unrighteous Britishers!

SARAH. Pshaw! It wasn't shooting,—it was stealing that I was worried about. I knew our boys needed every shot and every loaf that was hidden in the wood.

JOHN. Well, we hove in sight of home, and sure enough, there was Sarah in her apron.

SARAH. But worse than any kitchen apron,—there were twenty red-coats, a coming on the gallop. They all met right out there, Betsy, in front o' the gate. John got down and opened it, but up gallops Mr. Officer, big as life, and pulls out a sword and says, "Not so, driver; keep on straight to Boston." Josiah's always a meek chap, and he raised his goad, so I saw it was time for me to take a hand. Now, John, you be the British captain!

JOHN. Humph,—a pretty part to play! - Well, maybe these pesky rheumatics make me about grumpy enough.

SARAH. Well, I dared right up to him, brave as a turkey-cock, and I said, "Here, where are you going to take that wood? It's mine, and you have no right to take it."

JOHN. (*Gruff and stern.*) "Taken in the King's name, Madam."

SARAH. (*Viciously.*) "King fiddlesticks! If fat George wants any wood, let him go out and cut it. He will not have mine." You would have laughed to see Josiah Flagg. He stood on one foot, and then on 'tother, just about addled.

JOHN. (*Curtly.*) "Drive on."

SARAH. Yes, that's what the Britisher said. I saw we weren't making headway, so I just grabbed the nigh ox by the horns and began to pull him towards our path. I was brought up to manage oxen and I was no more afraid of them than I was of the Britishers. Holding on as tight as I could, I called out, "Josiah, don't you dare to drive on!"

JOHN. (*Raising his cane; thunders out.*) "Woman, stand back, or I'll order my men to fire!"

SARAH. Yes, he was certainly mad, but he was a little afraid of stirring up a hornet's nest and getting another Lexington Day started. I could read him like a book. "Goad 'em along, Josiah," I said to the boy, and he started them up,—down our path of course, for I was nearly pulling the nigh one's head off, but I yelled till I knew I'd raise the neighborhood, "*SHOOT! I dare ye to shoot a woman!*"

JOHN. I tell ye, Betsy, I never saw a neater bluff,—nor a braver one. He just twitched his horse around and said, “Oh, well, if it’s private property I have no wish to interfere with it,” and off they galloped.

BETSY. (*Jumps up and grasps Sarah’s hands.*) Oh, Nat would be so proud of his sister, dear! Don’t I wish I could be a heroine like you! Why, you’re—you’re as great as Lady Washington!

SARAH. (*Playfully boxes her ears.*) Never say such a thing, Betsy; I’m John’s wife and Nat’s sister and a Daughter of Liberty. That’s plenty enough. Oh, who can that be? (*Sounds of a triple rap.*)

BETSY. Oh, *can* it be Nat? Do open quickly, Sarah.

(*Sarah opens the door, enter tall man muffled in a heavy cloak with high collar nearly concealing his face, closes door hastily and speaks in a low deep voice.*)

MAN. This is the home of John Fulton, and these are friends of Liberty?

JOHN. I am John Fulton, sir, and I can vouch for these women. What is your desire? Will you be seated?

MAN. (*Throws off cloak, sits down wearily.*) I am Major Brooks, of the Colonial service. In my possession are despatches which should be carried into Boston tonight, through the enemies’ lines. This is business for our beloved General Washington, himself. Mr. Fulton, it has been told me of your patriotism, your reliability, and your knowledge of every nook and corner of Boston. Will you take the trust and do your best to carry these despatches?

JOHN. (*With a groan.*) Major Brooks, my heart is at your service, every beat of it,—but my plaguey legs! These rheumatics tie me down like ropes.

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Rises and paces about.*) This is very serious. They must be carried; and there is reason to think that I am watched and spied upon. I would gladly run the risk so far as my own safety is concerned, but there is too much at stake for the cause. Do you know of a man to go?

JOHN. (*Slowly, sadly shakes his head.*) No, sir; the able-bodied patriots are with the army.

SARAH. (*Coming to John's side.*) Major Brooks, would you trust the papers to a woman? I know the way as well as John does, and it might be a woman could pass unchallenged where a man could not.

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Looks searchingly at her.*) A woman?—I had not thought of that. No, Madam, no; I fear it would not do. The hours will be late, and the journey perhaps doubly dangerous for a woman.

JOHN. (*Sternly.*) No, Sarah, certainly not. It would be a terrible risk. Oh, these wretched legs of mine!

SARAH. (*Calmly.*) Think, Major Brooks—it must be done; you cannot do it, John cannot stir from his chair. I *can* do it, if it can be done at all. Forget I am a woman, and think only of Washington and our Country.

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Slowly.*) I do think, Mistress Fulton, and I honor your bravery and patriotism, but consider the hardships. It will be midnight before you can possibly reach Charlestown by walking, for we cannot risk the noise of a galloping horse. Do you know William Dawes' wharf?

SARAH. I do, sir.

MAJOR BROOKS. A boat with oars left in it is to be tied there. Now consider the long rowings,—the danger of discovery—Oh, it is entirely impossible. We shall have to consider some other plan.

JOHN. (*Slowly.*) Sarah's got a good deal of knack at doing what she sets out to do. I rather think she's safer to get through than any man I could put my hand on at this minute. If we had Revere now—

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Gravely.*) Revere would not do for this work. His dare-devil deeds have accomplished so much that he is a marked man. Such would not do.

SARAH. (*During the last two speeches has slipped out and now appears clad in long black cape and close black hood.*) This would be my wear, Major Brooks,—my mother's camlet cloak and hood that I have cherished from moths for surely such a night as this. Her mother fought the scalping Indians, and surely some of her bravery would wrap me round. I would you would agree to let me make the trial.

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Walks up and down in silence with folded arms—comes to an abrupt stop.*) It may be foolhardy, but I shall let you try. The sun never shone on a braver woman than you, Mistress Fulton, for many a man would quail at this task. This little packet contains dispatches. Do not lose it. If you are captured it will reveal nothing, for it is in a cipher to which only General Washington and myself have the key. Run no needless risks, and God grant you may return in safety.

SARAH. (*Courtseys deeply.*) I thank you, sir. I will try to be wise and prudent.

BETSY. (*Sobbing, grasps her.*) If Nat were here, he wouldn't let you go.

SARAH. (*Severely.*) Hush, Betsy,—and remember you must spend no time in tears. I leave John and these fires in your charge. You will hardly miss me t'ill I shall return. (*Bends over the invalid's chair.*) Now, John,—

JOHN. To think you have to do my work,—it's bitter hard. And for Heaven's sake, be careful, Sarah!

SARAH. (*Kisses his forehead.*) Now, Mohawk, this is my Tea-Party;—I didn't worry over you—now you do the same. (*She shakes her finger.*) Remember, Betsy, no tears! Farewell, Major Brooks! (*Exit Sarah, swiftly.*)

MAJOR BROOKS. What a woman! What a woman! And for us who are left, it will be a night's vigil of fear and hope. And, friends, let us heap the fire, resolving to hope only, that thus perchance our souls may strengthen hers upon its way.

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE II

Place: Same setting as former scene, the Fulton home in Medford.

Time: A few weeks later.

(*Sarah, Betsy, and Lucy Flucker-Knox, of Boston, in their best gowns, wearing caps and large aprons, are moving about the room.*)

BETSY. Well, surely 'tis a great event and worthy of our best gowns. We should keep on our caps and aprons till they gallop around the bend of the road. We shall hear the hoof-beats.

LUCY. I spent a power of time on my hair—and debated half an hour whether to wear patches.

SARAH. We shall look quite right, if we be not overcome with shyness. As you say, Betsy, 'tis not every day we entertain General Washington.

LUCY. Fie, Sarah; be not afraid of him. He is but a man after all, a man approving of good looks in ladies, and well pleased with goodly food and drink. Too bad you cannot make him some fish chowder, Sarah.

SARAH. (*Dusting and arranging.*) I did wish to give a great dinner, but he can stay but a few moments, so Major Brooks sent word. My best rich fruit cake and some refreshing punch in abundance for all seemed about the best that I could do in such short time—Oh, I wish I had a better ladle! This was my Grandmother's, and brought from England. It has a worn and battered look.

LUCY. Oh, a little bird told me,—told me!

SARAH. Told you what, dear?

LUCY. I must not tell,—but wait for maybe a half hour, maybe not so long. Poor old ladle, will you miss your chance of serving the great General?

SARAH. (*Shakes her.*) You provoking child! What do you mean? (*Sounds of stamping.*) Oh, here comes John!

BETSY. And Nathaniel, I know! Let me run to meet them! (*Exit.*) (*Betsy immediately runs back in, waving a scarf in her hand, followed by John Fulton, Nat Bradlee, and Paul Revere.*)

BETSY. O Sister Sarah, great works! This noble trio declare you must be blindfolded.

SARAH. O boys, no nonsense now, with the General almost at the door! Did they say, John, why he was coming?

JOHN FULTON. No word, save that Major Brooks said he wished to meet you. Of course I cannot imagine why anyone should wish to do that. There, sit down and be tied up. (*They bustle around, hide the old ladle, undo a new one, put it in the bowl, lead Sarah over to the table, and then unfasten the bandage.*)

SARAH. O John, this magnificent new ladle! Where did you ever get it, and how did you know it was the very thing I wanted? Ah, Lucy, this was your pretty secret! How did *you* know?

NAT. Well, Sarah, 'tis a present from a certain wild band of Mohawks, and made by one of 'em. You know we reckon you're the Mother o' the Boston Tea-Party.

SARAH. "Made by one?" Oh, I see the mark! 'Tis Mister Revere's fine work. I might have known, for there's not a silversmith in the colonies like him. O this grand gift! Mister Maker and Givers all,—let me salute you. (*She makes deep curtseys.*)

BETSY. (*Runs to window.*) Girls, girls,—off with our caps and aprons! They are surely coming. (*Sounds of galloping and whoas outside. The women hurry out and in, the men go out.*)

SARAH. Let us quickly be in dignified order to receive them. John and the men have gone out to meet them and help with the horses. Oh, my lovely, lovely ladle!

(*Enter General Washington and Officers, followed by John Fulton, Nat Bradlee and Paul Revere.*)

MAJOR BROOKS. (*Steps forward.*) Mistress Fulton, let me present to you General Washington, who needs no introduction. (*Sarah curtseys very deeply.*)

SARAH. And in turn, let me present Mistress Knox and Mistress Bradlee,—General Washington and Major Brooks. I think these other Boston friends are all known to one another. (*General bowing and curtseying.*)

GENERAL WASHINGTON. I am sorry not to be able to linger for a lengthy call, Mistress Fulton, but we have taken this time from duties that are pressing to pay you an especial visit.

SARAH. (*Curtseys.*) I am indeed greatly honored, and while I must not urge you to remain, I must surely claim the time to serve you punch, made by my Grandmother's recipe,—she who once brewed it to cheer and hearten a besieged block house, with Indians lying in wait all about it. Our friend, Mr. Revere, hath made for us a new ladle, to be dedicated by its first service to you.

GENERAL WASHINGTON. With great content shall I taste this historic drink, ladled out by such fair hands, by means of such a worthy ladle. And, Mistress Fulton, we beg permission to drink first the health of our hostess.

SARAH. (*Ladling.*) Permission is most gratefully given, honored Sir.

(*Washington, holds up glass, speaks in a meditative way.*)

WASHINGTON. And can this gracious lady be the one, Major Brooks, who so gallantly volunteered to be her country's messenger? Did you indeed walk those weary midnight miles to Charlestown? Did you make that perilous row across the river, in constant danger from the British patrol? I can scarcely believe it,—yet the message lay before me in the black of that early morning, and they told me of your valor.

SARAH. (*Expostulating with both hands.*) O Sir, so much must not be made of that little task! I wore dark garments that protected me better than a guard of minute men. I am strong, so the walk and row were but pleasant exercise to me,—and had it been a thousand times harder, I would have done it with joy in my heart, for you, Sir, and my country!

WASHINGTON. (*Bows low.*) Mistress Fulton, I can well believe you. They have told me other tales of the Mistress of the Tea-party, and of her who gave relief at Bunker Hill. (*He walks up and down, then pauses.*) Gentlemen, we are a Republican country, yet it comes to my mind that it will not be amiss if we bestow a title. (*Halts before her, lifts her hand and gravely kisses it.*) Mistress Sarah Bradlee Fulton, in the presence of my staff and these friends of ours, I will dub thee "PATRIOT," and to my mind it is a finer, greater title than any Duchess or Princess carries, beyond the seas. And now that our Lady Patriot may be spared the embarrassment of replying,—we will drain our glasses and onward to the business of our country. Good mistresses and friends all,—we will bid you farewell.

(*General and staff, bowing, walk out with dignity.*)

SARAH. (*Breathlessly.*) Who ever could have thought of such a thing? (*Looks at her hand.*) To think he kissed my hand! How is a body ever to wash dishes with it now?

REVERE. (*Slyly.*) Maybe John would wash the dishes,—or Nat here.

BETSY. No, Nat shall not, nor John,—but I would gladly be her lady of service. I feel as if she were our Queen.

SARAH. Nonsense, Betsy. What talk is this, when I was but a-jesting? My hand is honored, and ever will be, if I have children and grandchildren to remember me, but nothing can be taken from its honor by the loving service it does wherever needed. Why do we all

look so solemn? *Patriot or not, I'm growing hungry. Nat, did you bring the fish I bade you? See if it is cleaned and ready. Betsy and Lucy, bring out the best china, and we will celebrate with chowder.

REVERE. Aye, Mistress, and if General Washington could but partake of that, he would kiss thy left hand, also.

SARAH. (*Sternly.*) No nonsense, Mr. Revere. And John, why do you stand so silent? Is it still hard for you that the wretched rheumatism tied you that night to your chair?

JOHN. (*Slowly.*) Not that, my girl—I would be a craven indeed if I envied you those worthy honors,—but when the General spoke, I saw it all so plainly,—your danger, and the black water and the pointing rifles of the sentries. Why did I let you go?

SARAH. (*Laughs heartily and stops him playfully.*) Why, John, you are worse than an old woman. Here I'm going to live to ninety-five, I'll be bound,—and you a-worrying that I might have died a month ago! Well-a-day,—if that is all your cause to worry, you may make a smile as broad as Massachusetts Bay. Come, Lucy,—let us take the man's part and offer toasts, too. Take the beautiful ladle and *pour for ALL the Patriots; men and women who love our sturdy colonies and for Liberty will live and die!*

CURTAIN.

*At this point a minuet danced by eight couples may be introduced with beautiful effect.



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